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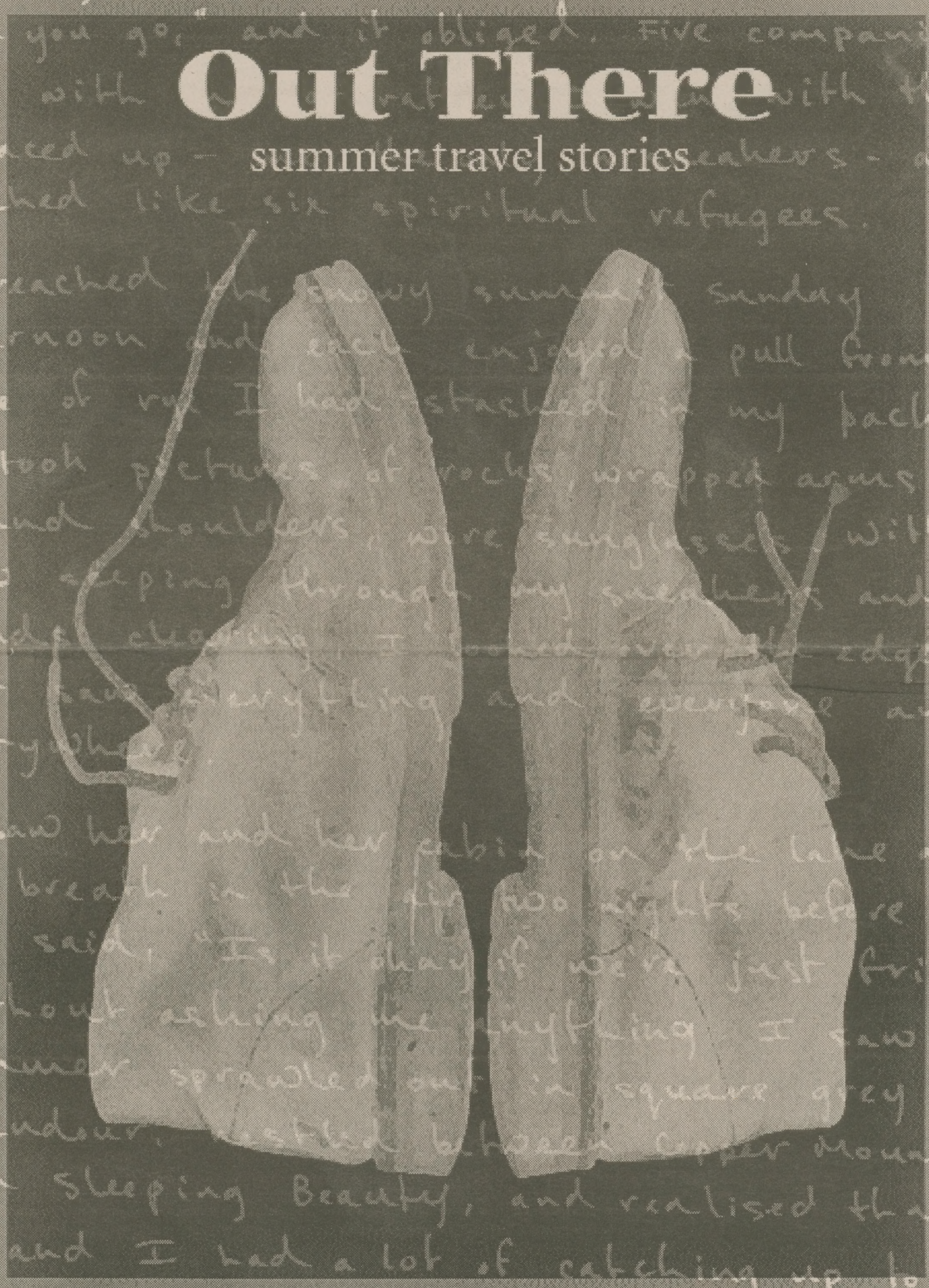
June 20th 2002 [55.02]
easing into it for 54 years

Out There

summer travel stories



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Editorial
Announcing a bosses' bill of rights

Dave Ages recently resigned as the director of the Employment Standards Branch – the government body ostensibly responsible for protecting employees from unscrupulous employers.

This non-partisan civil servant left in the wake of the recent changes to the Employment Standards Act, passed last month by the provincial Liberal government. Ages said these changes "constitute a serious erosion of worker rights and protections in this province."

The government and employers apparently felt that the previous crypto-Communist era of all-powerful labour and the poor, put-upon bourgeois had to make way for a new, sensible era of "flexibility" between employees and employers. But it seems the workers will be doing all the flexing – nay, contorting – and the bosses will be about as flexible as rigor mortis. The already semi-emasculated Employment Standards Branch will now be a fully-accredited eunuch.

Some highlights from the legislation:

The Branch will no longer be required to investigate complaints by workers.

Previously, if a workplace was unionized, the two parties – union and employer – could negotiate a collective agreement with terms different from the Act, so long as – taken as a whole – those differences "met or exceeded" the provisions in the act. The terms "meet" or "exceed" have been removed and now the two parties can negotiate an agreement that can be different in "any provision" from that of the act. In other words, "alternative" or employer-dominated unions can sign any agreement with any provisions whatsoever, even – to give an extreme example – accepting a wage of $2 an hour or no holidays at all, or 16-hour work days, even though this falls far outside the provisions of the Act. Expect to see a growth of hitherto rabidly anti-union employers suddenly "inviting" management-friendly unions into the workplace.

Employers now no longer have to display a poster of employees' rights at work.

The new Act eliminates the need for child employment permits. Think about this one for a second and the fantastic investment opportunities that will now be available in this province for child labour! No longer will Nike have to go all the way to Thailand to produce sneakers by those amazingly nimble small fingers – we can have our very own sweatshops in Vanderhoof!

The minimum call-in time is now reduced to two hours from the current four – perfect for that noon-hour rush at Subway.

There will no longer be 24 hours notice for a change of shift. In fact, employers won't even have to post a work schedule. Workers can then be called in at any time, with no notice whatever.

Weekly double time is eliminated entirely - someone could work 84 hours a week and receive only time and a half for any hours over 40.

All sorts of possible schedules are now legal: two hours a day, six days a week; ten hours a day, 16 days in a row. . . .

Au revoir statutory holidays! No stats for anyone who works fewer than four days a week.

As the Branch's budget and staffing has been cut by 30 per cent and over half of its offices have been closed, the Branch is now looking at farming out enforcement of the Act to employers' associations. A co-operative agreement with the Restaurant Association is almost ready to go. So when you have a complaint against the boss, go tell the boss. We're sure he'll be very understanding.

And if the employer breaks any of these very onerous regulations, boy, will there be hell to pay: the Employment Standards Branch will send the aggrieved employee a pamphlet on overtime.

Watch for further assaults on workers' rights and perhaps even for the Branch to be dissolved entirely in the coming years. Further changes to the act are already scheduled for the fall.

How long are we going to wait and how much are we going to take?

Editorial topics are decided on by staff at editorial meetings. Editorials are written by one or more staff members, and are not necessarily the opinion of all staff members.

Don't like what you read?

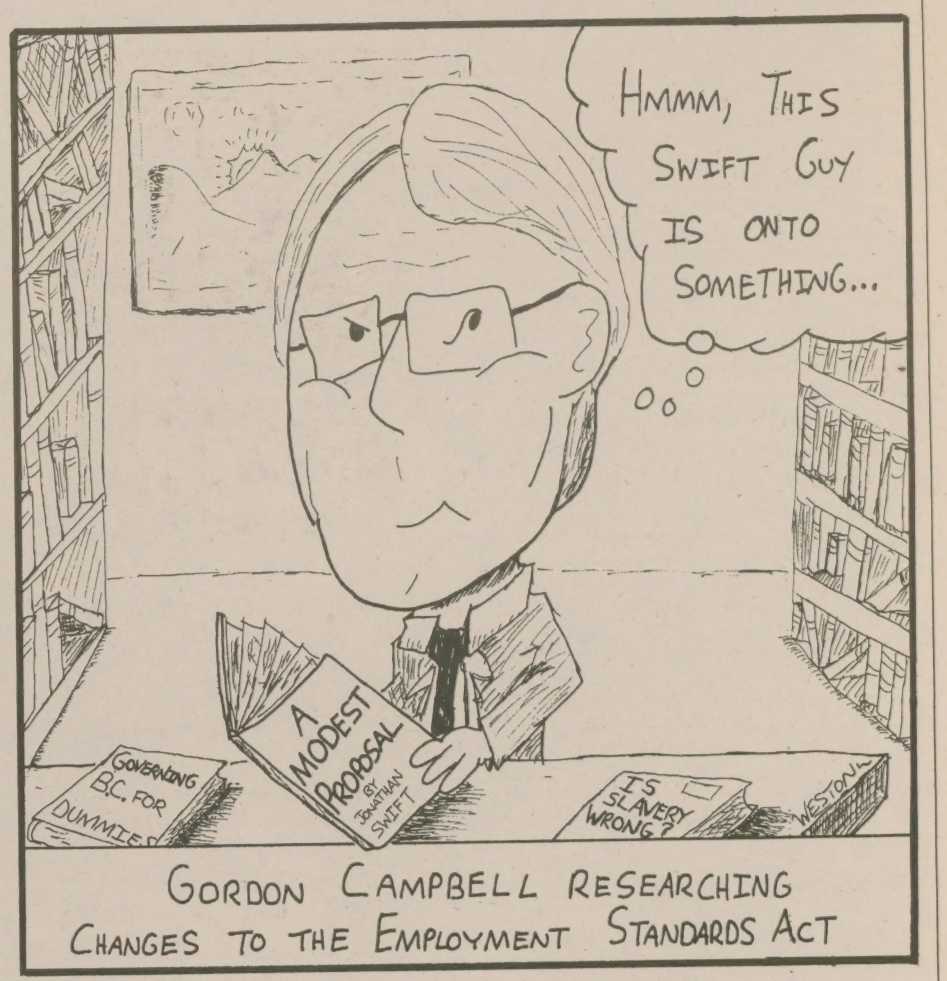
Write us, or write *for* us: martlet@uvic.ca

Be like Tobi.

Come on down.

[The Martlet. The basement of the SUB. B011.]
You know you want to.

Westoon
by Jeffrey Weston


HMMM, THIS SWIFT GUY IS ONTO SOMETHING...
A MODEST PROPOSAL BY JONATHAN SWIFT
GOVERNING B.C. FOR DUMMIES
IS SLAVERY WRONG?
WESTON
GORDON CAMPBELL RESEARCHING CHANGES TO THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

Paving paradise?

Examining UVic's Draft Campus Plan

by Mark Vardy

Trees will be felled to make way for the UVic's new medical building, despite the Draft Campus Plan stating that future growth will be "sensitive to the natural areas of the campus."

Bright orange survey ribbon is already hanging from branches in the strand of second-growth Douglas fir off the southwest corner of the Cunningham building, marking the site of the new four-story building.

The medical building, due to be completed by August 2004, will offer 24 spaces to students to do their first two years of medical school at UVic before going on to complete their degree at the University of British Columbia.

Some members of the UVic community are concerned about the location of the building. Emily MacNair, smart growth coordinator for the POLIS Project, said: "The university should put a moratorium on building in green spaces. With the spaces that are potential building sites on campus, it doesn't make sense to start building on an area that is forested."

Jack Falk, vice president of finance and operations and chair of the Campus Development Committee, said the committee checked with the biology department about building in the forest.

"I don't want to downplay the fact that there are trees on that site," said Falk. "We consulted the biology department because someone claimed they used it for teaching. They told us that it's not a valuable teaching area."

While the Draft Campus Plan does include principals of environmental stewardship, it also states that the "final locational decisions [of new building sites] will be based on programmatic requirements and relationships to other related buildings and uses."

Falk said that the site of the new medical building was determined by a committee who chose the location because medical students will be using many of the facilities in the nearby Cunningham building. But there is a way for a building to go in close to the Cunningham building without destroying a forested area, said MacNair.

"In the Campus Plan it says they're interested in building on parking lots first," said MacNair. "There is a parking lot in proximity that they could use."

Professor Michael M'Gonigle, eco-research chair in environmental law and policy, said the university needs to make a commitment to sustainable development. He said UVic has the potential to be a national or international leader in sustainable building practices but the current Draft Campus Plan is "a sign of mediocrity rather than excellence."

While the Draft Campus Plan appears to have taken environmental and sustainability issues into account, "what they say in the plan bears no relationship to what they're actually doing," said M'Gonigle.

The Campus Development Committee has hosted public forums for both students and local residents to give their input about the shape of the plan, but some feel that the consultation process is flawed.

Rae St. Arnoe, a student double-majoring in geography and environmental studies, attended three of the four public consultations hosted between June 3 and June 10, 2002.

"I don't see how [the Campus Development Committee] are going to be able to take into account the concerns that were expressed," said St. Arnoe. "To incorporate those concerns they'd have to come up with a whole new plan."

Jack Falk said the Campus Development Committee is planning on hosting another round of consultations this September, aimed specifically at students. St. Arnoe pointed out that in September students are so often busy with getting a new academic year underway that they may not have enough time to become aware of the issue. Troy Sebastian, chair of the University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS), concurs.

"I'm anticipating that we will be able to work with Jack Falk and the Campus Development Committee," said Sebastian. "But if the consultation process needs to be extended beyond September, then there needs to be flexibility. The UVSS has the capacity and the resources to initiate our own consultation with students, if that is necessary."

The Draft Campus Plan can be viewed at www.uvic.ca/draftcampusplan/

Look for coverage of the Draft Campus Plan's impact on UVic's athletics facilities in the next edition of the Martlet. For a sneak preview, check this edition's back page.

Communication breakdown: negotiating SUB space

by Robin Platts

UVSS space renegotiations got off to a rocky start last month when the board of directors passed a motion to "make 90 days notice of its intentions to terminate the space agreements" that currently exist for two groups – UVic Pride and the Women's Centre.

When the issue was raised during the board meeting on May 27, some of those present feared the worst. The motion's wording led some to believe that the two groups were in danger of being "kicked out" of the Student Union Building.

"That has never been our intention," said UVSS Director of Services Michelle Kinney. "The other (constituency) groups have gone without an agreement for years."

The existing agreements – implemented in 1996 – expired in September of last year but continue "until termination with 90 days notice by one party."

UVSS Director of Finance Jonas Gifford said he sent e-mails inviting both groups to renegotiate.

The Women's Centre and Pride acknowledged that Gifford sent the e-mails but questioned why further attempts were not made to negotiate before the 90-day termination notice was passed, especially given the physical proximity of the groups' offices to the UVSS.

"Why use e-mails when we're all within a few feet of each other?" said Pride Chair Dan Kerr.

Pride and the Women's Centre feel that the current agreements are the only thing that ensures them space in the SUB, but the board has pointed out that other constituency groups exist and stay in the SUB with no agreement.

photo by Robin Platts

Eliza Walter, UVSS Women's Centre oordinator, representin' outside the centre in the SUB.

The UVSS board wants to throw out the old agreements and come to a new arrangement.

According to Kinney, the motivation behind the motion was to "start talking about all the spaces that the constituency groups use . . . so they all have the same terms."

What may not have been successfully conveyed to all parties was that the motion was, in Kinney's words, "only a process motion . . . to say, 'let's get rid of these agreements' to figure out (a new agreement or policy)."

UVSS Chairperson Troy Sebastian said he would like to see the constituency groups and the Native Students' Union have "something similar" in terms of agreements but didn't want to see a single specific agreement imposed on all groups.

Women's Centre collective member Danielle Gauld feels that the whole situation has been "blown out of proportion" and would like to see a "de-escalation of tension."

The problem, Gauld suggested, was not the space agreement issue in itself, but how it was handled. The motion came during the summer months, a time when constituency groups have a limited member presence.

Pride, in addition, had recently hired new staff who say they had not been made aware of the situation.

"We need communication to be better," said Gauld. "We both share the blame for that."

Gauld is optimistic, feeling that the situation "has opened lines of communication . . . I really want to avoid it being an us-versus-them situation."

Kinney stressed that the current board is very sympathetic to the causes of the various constituency groups, adding that if ever there was a time when the groups could feel safe about having new agreements made, it is now.

"This is the year you want this to come up," Kinney said. "It's a completely sympathetic board, who would never consider throwing these groups out. Who knows who'll be in next year?"

Kinney said it is important to remember that "we're all the same group. We all want the same thing. I think that gets lost sometimes."

Sebastian pointed out that most board members belong to one constituency group or another.

Ryan Barry, Pride publicity coordinator, said he is confident the board is "sympathetic to our needs," but feels there are flaws in the current renegotiation process.

"They have our best intentions at heart but they've gone about it in the wrong way," Barry said. "It's a blemish on this board to have made this motion. They've basically opened the door to a right-wing board to do this."

Both Pride and the Women's Centre want to make sure that they have an agreement that will protect them in the future, should a board that is unsympathetic to their causes be elected.

Part of the renegotiation process will be to clarify whether the groups are "a glorified subcommittee or a separate organization," said Kerr. "We're interested in having that defined as well."

One of the key issues that will come up in the process of negotiating new agreements is whether the two groups will have to start paying triple net.

Triple net, which Gifford has stressed is not to be confused with rent, covers lighting, heating and other costs based on space usage at a rate of $5.45 per square foot per month.

Although the relationship between the board and the constituency groups was strained as a result of the May 27 motion, relationships between the constituency groups have been improved.

"Communication between the constituency groups has increased remarkably," said Barry. "It has made us come together and communicate better and work together more."

Both Pride and the Women's Centre seem optimistic about the outcome of this situation.

"I feel very positive," said Kerr.

Israeli academics to attend UVic conference despite international boycott

by Leigh Phillips

Despite an internationally organized boycott on cultural and research links with Israel, nine academics from the Universities of Haifa, Tel Aviv and Bar-Ilan will attend the International Human Science Research Conference "Inciting Dialogue at the Edges of Human Science Research," being held at the University of Victoria from June 19 to 22.

More than 300 European, Israeli and Palestinian academics have signed a petition – originally published as a letter in *The Manchester Guardian* in April – calling for "a moratorium on all future cultural and research links with Israel . . . until such time as the Israeli government abide by UN resolutions and open serious peace negotiations with the Palestinians along the lines of the recent Saudi peace plan."

Many of the signatories are from the United Kingdom, including leading neurobiologist Dr. Steven Rose and evolutionary biologist Dr. Richard Dawkins. Others are from Ireland, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as one from Israel itself. A similar boycott is currently being organized in the United States but, as of yet, Canadian academics have remained silent.

Dr. Marie Hoskins, of the UVic School of Child and Youth Care, is chair of the conference. Hoskins is sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, but feels that any academic boycott would be inappropriate.

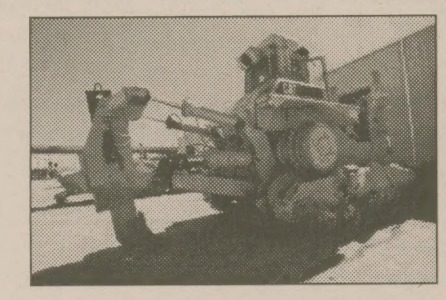
"I was recently in the middle of the Palestinian protests in Italy," Hoskins said, "and I feel their plight in a really visceral way. My heart goes out to them. But I would just hate to see the end of dialogue between academics. If there is ever a time to be trying to open dialogues, it is now."

Other UVic professors feel the same way. Psychology professor Dr. Steve Lindsay was engaged in joint research with a professor from Bar Ilan University.

"Social and cultural ties are productive," said Lindsay. "I support a boycott of commercial trade [with Israel] but not an intellectual embargo. Boycotting market goods puts pressure on institutions, but intellectually isolating things is likely to make things worse."

Lisa Taraki of Birzeit University, in the occupied territories, supports the boycott. Taraki questions the distinction between academia and the rest of the economy.

"Palestinian scholars encounter extreme difficulty in traveling to international conferences," Taraki said. "An academic boycott is no more onerous than one of Israeli goods and services. Any disruption caused is precisely the point."



This is a picture of a Caterpillar bulldozer.

UVic professor Laurie King-Irani, co-founder of the Electronic Intifada Web site, is skeptical.

"I understand where (Taraki) is coming from," said King-Irani, "and I'm not sitting in the middle of a place that is being bulldozed or destroyed, but it is often in Israeli universities that we find the bailiwick of opposition to the occupation. Israeli (academic) friends of mine are sick and disgusted by what's going on and speak out against it in their classes and get catcalls back from some of their students."

"I think people need to think hard about where best to put pressure. I have no problem with REM, say, or the Red Hot Chili Peppers if they refused to play in Israel, like musicians did under apartheid in South Africa – that might work," said King-Irani, referring to the boycott by artists and musicians led by Israeli musicians Emily Jacir, Anton Sinkewich and Oz Shelach. "And companies like Caterpillar - their equipment is being used to bury people in their homes. Boycott products involved in the occupation, Israeli goods. But if some expert on gender identity in *Paradise Lost* from Tel Aviv University can't work with his colleague somewhere else – how is that going to change anything?"

Professor Sabine Schuerholz-Lehr, co-ordinator of UVic's Office of International Affairs concurs, "Lots of the research that the university does helps these sort of countries become more democratic. It encourages peace and good governance."

Meanwhile, three Israeli professors have written an open letter to Princeton University in the United States, calling on its governors to divest all its holdings in corporations doing significant business in Israel. However, the UVic Communications Department reports that neither the university nor any of the university employees' pension plans, "to the best of our knowledge, have any holdings in any Israeli companies."

UVic does not have an official position on the boycott.

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Only The Devo

Moving quickly forwards and honking. F

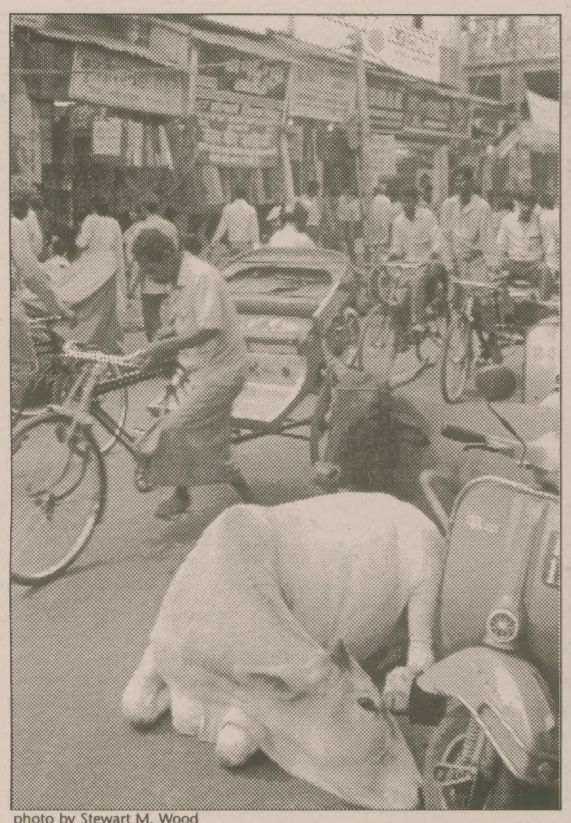


photo by Stewart M. Wood

Yates and Douglas, 5 p.m., Monday.
Just kidding. It's Tuesday.

by Stewart M. Wood

There's a fair bit of the divine in just about everything in India – roadside altars, wandering saints and more temples than you can shake a stick at. Seeing God is definitely on the tourist map as far as I'm concerned.

Finding God in India is easy. My friend Asaf explained it to me. We were looking at the madness that is Relief Road, one of the main traffic arteries in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Every type of vehicle imaginable crammed and jammed with camel-carts and pedestrians for a few inches of space. I surmised there were no rules (I was wrong), and no apparent limit to the choking fumes that this seething mass of howling, honking machines could emit (I was right).

Asaf is one of India's 105 million Muslims. He told me that every day he is reminded of God's existence by this sight. Amused at my puzzled infidel face, he explained that every single day the traffic is like this – crazy, insupportable, overwhelming. Proof for him of the Will of God is that somehow, despite the objections of logic, it all works. This interpretation depends upon whether you actually think it does work.

Um. Maybe it does.

I was eager to see the Hand of God. Relief Road is a thoroughfare, which out of sheer numbers, noise and pollution alone, might well prove the point. Ahmedabad itself is a large, heavily-populated city of sprawling industrial mills and factories. It certainly isn't promoted as a tourist destination.

The *Lonely Planet* guide warns that "venturing out in an autorickshaw is a nerve-shattering experience not to be undertaken lightly." I'd come looking for an adventure, and this was it. Bravura can take hold of even the faint-hearted traveler in India. I decided to be bold and plunge headlong into the maelstrom.

The autorickshaw is a three-wheeled device powered by a two-cycle engine. At least, that's what it sounds like; some of the more hopeless models provoke lively debate as to whether some Indian devilry is at work harnessing the motors of hairdryers or vacuum cleaners.

All autorickshaws, or "autos," are painted black and yellow. The high-powered buzzing they make, along with their tendency to congregate angrily around the traveler, creates a vivid mental image. The similarity to a wasp is startling.

The auto is common in urban India. It is cheap – unless you just arrived, in which case it is horribly expensive. It allows passengers to experience the sights, sounds and smells of India. It is by the same token frightening, filthy and downright dangerous, depending on your perspective. Captive within a dark, poky shell, it's not for the easily rattled or the faint of heart. But it is fun.

The driver sits in the cab ahead of the passenger(s), a position that allows the fare to direct the driver where necessary or beg mercy when appropriate. The carrying capacity of the auto is surprisingly large; I've seen 12 schoolchildren crammed happily into one in Old Delhi. Before entering it's customary to agree on a destination and price for the journey. Although there is a meter, it is traditionally ignored in favour of debate with the hapless in order to increase the drivers' take.

Auto drivers possess the ability to sniff out potentially profitable passengers with the same knack sharks have for detecting a drop of blood in the ocean.

Precise arrangements vary from city to city. For example drivers in Delhi generally do not use the meter. Ahmedabadians do; they also are happy to show you the charge card, written in Gujarati. This is as honest as it is shrewd; chances are very slim that foreigners will have bothered to make the effort to speak Gujarati, let alone read it. A puzzled look may well result in the driver confidently claiming, say, 75 rupees for a 15-rupee trip. Of course this is only an opening offer and you may well profit by suggesting a lower price. Given that drivers very rarely own the machine, and will have to pay the lion's share of the days' take to the real owner, taking a few extra paise from a wealthy westerner is hardly outrageous. Remembering this, however, is all part of the Great Game of traveling in India.

I suspect that auto drivers do not need a license to operate; merely quick wits, decisive reactions and, above all, a devout belief in God. Or Gods. This is usually evident in the images and icons that festoon the cabs. A recent trend is the addition of lethal-looking tridents at head height – a symbol of Siva and a deterrent to any rowdy passengers. Hindu drivers are likely to have little shrines to Ganesh, the elephant-headed god of wealth and luck. I came to find this reassuring, even to the point of vaguely searching for cabs with little Ganeshes present. I also noticed a growing number of carefully handpainted images of macho film stars appearing on mudflaps. However, my unfamiliarity with current Indian cinema allowed me only to identify Anil Kapoor, who seems sadly to have been passed by when it comes to mudflap iconography.

Geographic and numeric debate having been done, it is time to set off. There is a prime directive when it comes to Indian traffic engagement: Move Quickly Forwards. Indian

Between leaving and getting there

Car trouble and the redefinition of love in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan

by Suzanne Beaubien

Before we left on our cross-Canada journey, I wrote in my journal:

"We have no plan. Other than a ferry at 11 a.m., a CD player borrowed from Craig and a cooler with some groceries, this is our plan: We're leaving and then we'll get there. In between? This is where the adventure begins."

Boring people plan, I thought. Daring people jump in with both feet and a cooler with some groceries.

Before we left on our cross-Canada journey, Lisa and I also decided we needed themes. Life is a great story, we said. And every great story has to have a theme. A theme would make this trip more than just movement between two geographical points. A theme would give this trip some emotional significance, make it meaningful, inspire change.

I quickly made my theme "Coming home to myself," even though I was going places I'd never been.

What this meant, I wasn't sure, but just look at my plan and it's apparent that vague is my middle name.

The first part of our plan was quickly jettisoned. We missed our ferry and had to wait for an hour. While we sat in the terminal, we started a to-do list in the notebook I had brought.

#1: Redefine Love.

It was a giant task and had the car not broken down in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, on the second day, we might have made some progress. But the Greyhound was not conducive to discussing the shortcomings of the word Love and our to-do list was forgotten until we giddily added the things we'd already done on the outskirts of Toronto:

"Sell the car," I wrote, laughing. "And don't accept less than a hundred dollars."

Sitting in the ferry terminal, with mugs full of weak coffee between us, we agreed that there should be more words to explain the multitude of loves that exist between ourselves and the people we know. If there were more words, we thought, there could be more love.

Like the mythical 100 words the Inuit have for snow, it seems only logical that our language should allow for a range of loves, not just the "One Big Ecstatic" and "Sad Love."

We talked about the people we know and said how we loved them so but we needed whole sentences to describe the variations in loving. Inflections in our voices did the work of the missing words that we hoped to invent over our four-day drive.

"Do you love her?"

"Of course."

...out Ride Rickshaws

...ng. Finding God has never been so easy.

drivers have a tendency to under-rev the engine, causing such mechanical groaning as to suggest the engine will fall off. Once the motor is up to speed however, the auto, facing downhill and with a good wind behind it, can move rapidly. It's quite a joy to get a little breeze up to dispel the fumes and heat, although sheer weight of numbers on the road means that the experience is short-lived and inevitably bumper-to-bumper jams soon occur.

This does not, however, prevent the driver from moving forward unless something serious such as a policeman or sacred cow is blocking the way. Even then, stopping is frowned upon when so much as a centimetre of space might be occupied.

Second rule: Honk the horn. The use of the horn is a much-debated topic amongst westerners used to more sedate road protocols. It is indeed an exceptional vehicle that does not have "HORN PLEASE" painted in very large, visible letters across its rear. Often this will be coupled with a swastika. Despite the ancient and holy origins of this sacred symbol there is always a small part of me that momentarily hesitates when I see it, particularly during the adrenaline rush of a really fast auto ride. It might be the last thing I see.

Indian drivers drive with their thumbs firmly on the horn button. This is not without cause; it is considered etiquette to advise fellow drivers and pedestrians alike of your presence by gleefully beeping, honking and blowing. A great orchestra of sounds are available, from the insistent ringing of bicycle bells, high-pitched shrieks of scooters and the mighty bellow of the trucks. This all creates a robust symphony of noise, day and night.

I frequently saw pedestrians step blithely into the path of an oncoming bus during heavy flow traffic only to spring back once the horn was sounded, as if up to that point there could not have possibly been a vehicle coming.

Daytime driving is one thing; it is quite another to ride at night. Nighttime driving presents its own challenges to the auto aficionado. The apparent rules for overtaking are quite complex, if not downright unfathomable.

The auto driver (drivers are invariably male) is obliged to turn on the high beams as he overtakes another motorist. He simultaneously presses the horn and throws the auto into a suitable gear. At this point the two (or more) vehicles will be locked neck-and-neck, each obeying the first protocol, continuing to move quickly forward. No quarter is asked or given. The line demarking the centre of the road is unheeded no matter what is coming in the other direction. This is where the third rule comes into play: Turn The Lights Off When Overtaking, if they are on in the first place.

In moments like this the passenger might be cast into a sort of dreamlike reverie, when many metaphysical questions will become suddenly pertinent. "Is there a god?" for example. Indian passengers seem to possess this serenity throughout their auto journeys. The western passenger is likely to make some sort of snap decision as to the mental health of the driver, and may quickly decide that there is a god after all. Or, that there is no god. It is a time for contemplation; have you taken out health insurance, for instance. The cab becomes a dark, quiet place not unlike a confessional booth where reflection and penitence suddenly seem like a Good Idea.

At moments like this, Asaf's belief in the presence of God comes to mind. In all the journeys I have so far taken in rickshaws – and there have been many – not one has so much as caused a bruise, at least on me. There have been some real screamers, some near-misses a hair's breadth away from disaster, yet here I am nonetheless. How to explain it? Certainly not by superb driving alone; there have been many times when the operator's skills and judgment have been disastrous - yet catastrophe avoided in spite of this.

Perhaps Asaf is correct. Perhaps I have, unexpectedly, found God.

photo by Stewart M. Wood

"The driver sits in the cab ahead of the passenger(s), a position that allows the fare to direct the driver where necessary or beg mercy when appropriate."

"No, do you love her?"

It doesn't work on paper. You cannot read the way the word is said, cannot know which way it is meant. All this, and we hadn't even got on the ferry yet. It was then that we knew this was going to be some ride, car or no car.

Lisa had removed all keys from her keychain save the one for the Toyota Cressida that would take us to Toronto. On the empty ring she wound a pendant of St. Jude, the patron Saint of hopeless causes. We laughed at its significance (Love is impossible to define, I thought) but didn't think it meant we wouldn't make it to our destination. It dangled from the ignition as we sped through Hope, B.C., when Lisa turned to me and asked, "What happens when you get beyond hope?" Did the hope she meant have a capital H, I wondered.

"Like the mythical 100 words the Inuit have for snow, our language should allow for a range of loves"

We looked at St. Jude, swinging back and forth. He had no answers. We would have to make it up as we went, I said.

We were only 24 hours beyond Hope by the time the car died - 20 kilometres outside Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. It rolled to a stop just over a long hill, and we cursed as semi trucks rumbled by, sending the Cressida into fits. Resigned, we called a tow truck and then shut off the phone when Lisa's mom called.

"It's hopeless," said Sunny, our tow-truck driver. For some reason he was immediately convinced that our engine had seized. But though he wore blue coveralls, he was no mechanic and we couldn't accept his diagnosis just then.

As Sunny rambled on about the seven consecutive days of concrete pouring that it took to build the town's grain elevator, I looked in the tow-truck's rear-view mirror where the Cressida was framed. Behind the car, the prairie sun was setting. If life is a story, than this is foreshadowing, I thought.

That night we got drunk at the Commercial Hotel, the only bar in Maple Creek. The Commercial was conveniently located next to Alf's Garage, where we would take the car the following day. We drank Coors Light, the only beer on tap, out of jam jars and played the jukebox with the locals.

"You're fucking lunatics," said our new friend Warren when we told him about our themes. "Seize the day," he said and tilted his glass of vodka at us.

Warren was drunk and we knew it would be hopeless to try to explain what we meant. The waitress ripped a cheque from the book in his front shirt pocket and filled it out. She bought us more beers with his money, and then he kissed us both on the cheek when he got up to go. Lisa wondered aloud how to describe our love for Warren. We went upstairs to our room, and thought about it some more.

We made it to Toronto Friday afternoon, after two days on the Greyhound. If life is a story, than 48 hours wedged in a velour seat is not what you would call a page-turner. Maybe this was the denouement, I thought as we drove through 18 hours of Ontario, all of it the same shade of grey.

Lisa has been cooking in a tree-planting camp ever since our trip. I sent her an email the other day. Part of it read:

"I've been thinking about our to-do list. Maybe there is way to communicate love with words. Maybe you need only look in the other's eyes? Maybe that is why long-distance love is so difficult? It's all about the eyes?"

I'm still waiting for her reply. Maybe it will be the conclusion.

Jesus doesn't want me for a bathmate

by Lindsey Starr

"Do you want to interview Jesus?"

Puzzled silence.

"There's a guy called Jesus, who has a Web site with the domain name Jesus.com."

I accepted the assignment but wondered why a person would want to name their site Jesus.com. A business ploy to attract clients? A zealous religious site? An attempt to get a jaded society to pay attention to the oft-forgotten Messiah?

A mysterious single man in the Washington, D.C., area set up Jesus.com as an on-line dating service for himself. This man not only calls himself Jesus but physically resembles the stereotypical depiction of the golden-haired, sad-faced Saviour.

Jesus says he is tired of the presumptuous dating rituals of the new millennium and hopes to find a woman who shares nis spiritual beliefs. Jesus likes classical music, 19th-century German philosophers, lying on his back and looking at the stars, and cooking for "that special lady."

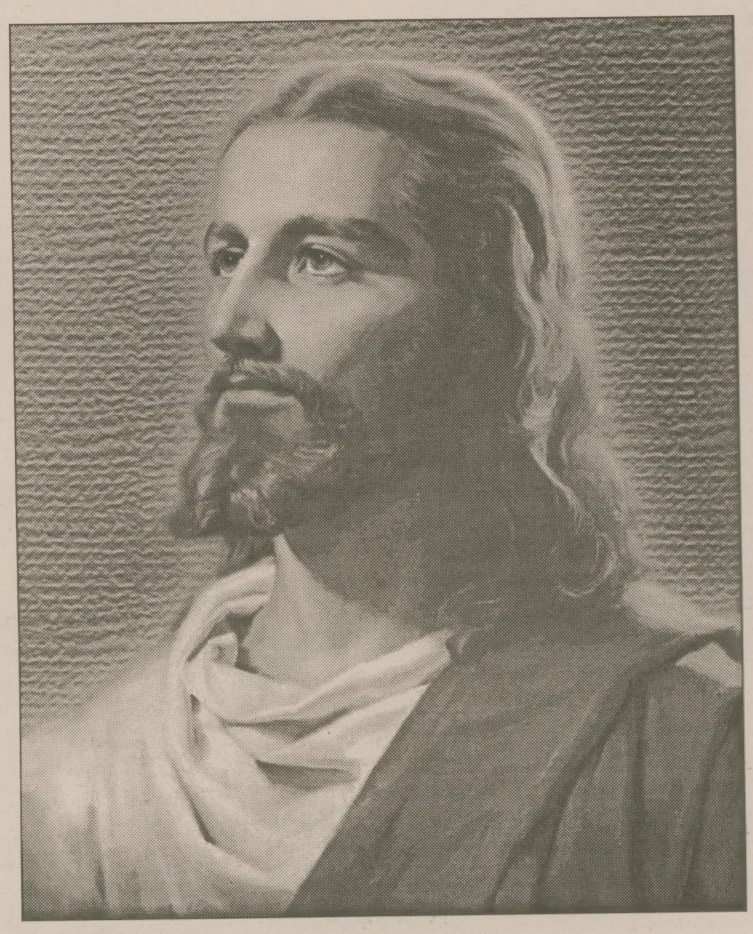
He is 6'3", 185 pounds and is training for his first triathlon. Jesus, in other words, is a "catch."

But Jesus.com is much more than just a one-man crusade to find the perfect woman. (And Jesus assures us that there is a perfect woman for him out there.) Jesus manages to cram in a little debauchery and good old-fashioned fun on the side. He hawks merchandise, including the popular "Jesus Doesn't Love Me" T-shirt and baseball cap, and the Jesus-giving-the-finger T-shirt.

You can also download such movies as "Jesus goes shopping for a Porsche" and "Jesus has a bath."

Personal hygiene is important to Jesus. His site's most popular attraction is the "Bathe with Jesus" contest, whereby one lucky woman gets the chance to share a tub with the Messiah.

In a society leaning ever towards the commercialization of spirituality, it seems odd that a 26-year-old has come to occupy what should be one of the most lucrative domain names in the world.



Do you want to bathe with Jesus? Lindsey does. Just look at this guy!

So how did Jesus get the rights to Jesus.com?

According to on-line rumours, the domain name was sold in 1994 to a Mr. Majaxin in the D.C. area. But it wasn't until 1999 that a tantalizing "site in progress" page would load. For 22 agonising months, the on-line community breathlessly waited, wondering who or what would appear.

When Jesus.com finally arrived, it was not the Second Coming but did feature a bearded, robe-clad man.

Some members of the global business community would like to occupy Majaxin's domain. According to an article in *Wired*, a Norway-based company that builds "Christian portals" has emailed Jesus several times asking him to sell the URL.

Jesus has not responded, but the FAQ section of his site gives a clue about his stance:

Q: "Will you sell your domain to me?"

A: "If you can write a check for 10+ million we might have something to talk about."

Although he has yet to receive a $10-million offer, Jesus gets plenty of hate mail. Rather than let such feedback bring him down, he features it in his "Mailbag."

"People send me all sorts of e-mail," he reveals on the site, "ranging from admiration to cliched regurgitations of robotic dogma. I generally ignore dead-end e-mail that offers no communication of new ideas but sometimes I respond to the gems of hopelessness, knowing that I increase the level of comedy in the whole of the cosmos."

Jesus has been the subject of numerous newspaper articles and the butt of quite a few "Worst of the Web" hit lists. Most of the articles have been pure speculation. Jesus doesn't do interviews.

Undaunted by this fact, I timidly requested an interview via email. After a few days and no response, I tried his press email address and finally his phone line ($2.50 US per minute), which supposedly allows you to speak with him.

No reply.

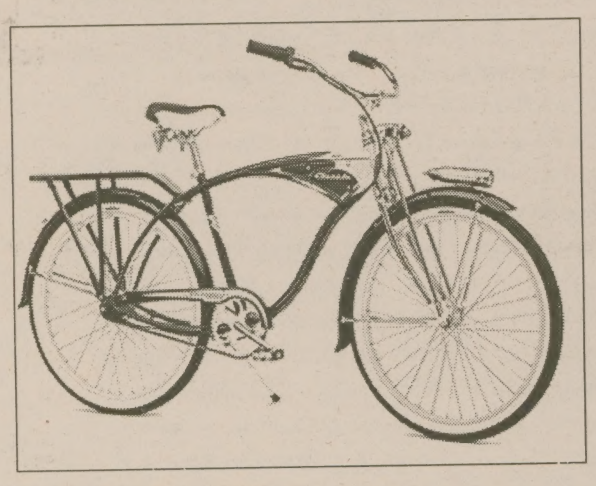
As a last ditch effort, I decided to try the site's "Date Jesus" section. The selection process to actually get through to Jesus is a rigorous one. There are compatibility quizzes. (Would you describe your physique as: slim, athletic, overweight, large?) Then you must attach photos of yourself to attract the elusive one. Jesus lives in the D.C. metro area but is willing to commute. (Is Victoria too far?)

Since I, like Jesus, am a triathlete, I sent some recent photos of myself, accompanied by the message "Triathlete seeks partner for training and spiritual connection."

But Jesus didn't call. I gave up hope. Jesus does not love me. But I don't take it personally. Jesus is a busy guy.

"I get too much e-mail every day to answer everything sent to me," Jesus explains on the site, "but rest assured that I read it all. If you have put forth thought and feeling in what you wrote then have faith that it is known and valued."

Got one of these?



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Tinactin for wanderlust

by Tobias Ebel

At the end of every school year, papers and exams give way to itchy feet as stressed-out students dream about getting to know the world and experiencing the diversity of foreign cultures. Since students are naturally short of money, traveling further than North America is usually wishful thinking. The Student Work Abroad Programme (SWAP) exists to encourage demoralized wannabe globetrotters and help them get a job in one of SWAP's partner countries.

It's "an easy, straightforward way for you to take this imaginary trip that you couldn't afford and turn it into reality," promises the SWAP brochure.

SWAP can help you get to the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Germany, Austria, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, South Africa or the United States – but not for free.

"Before you go you need to have a few thousand dollars saved up," said Kevin Johnstone, who spent 10 months working and traveling in Australia via SWAP. Foreign governments require a bank statement showing proof of a specified amount of support funds – anywhere from $1,500 in the United Kingdom up to $3,300 to $4,000 in New Zealand and Australia.

"You don't have to pay this money," said Johnstone. "It's just to make sure that you do not enter a country without any financial resources." SWAP participants must also pay a registration fee that averages out at $412. In return, applicants obtain their visas.

"We talk to the individual consulates and consequently eliminate the often-complicated process to apply for a visa by yourself," explained Myka Spensley, SWAP coordinator at UVic's Travel Cuts.

Since 1975 over 30,000 Canadians have chosen to travel with SWAP. In order to adjust to the new environment, students first find accommodation in the SWAP housing centres, which are usually based in the capital regions of the countries. There, students can find all the necessary information they need to find a place to live and start their job hunt.

"Employers in Canada have lots of admiration for people who have worked overseas," said Spensley, "because it shows that they are outgoing and more likely to take initiatives."

"Most of the available jobs are in the service industry or retail," said Johnstone. "I had a job in the media village of the Olympic Games. I was doing kitchen handiwork. Basically I was helping cooks out, cutting vegetables, doing the dishes, all that sort of stuff."

SWAP does not guarantee employment. Everyone is responsible for his or her own luck. Consequently, applicants should set themselves realistic targets.

"All the employers know that you are a traveler," said Johnstone, "so they do not hook you up with jobs that take three to four months practice. It all depends on the economy of the country you are staying in, the skills you have and how hard you are looking for a job.

Nadja Mahlke works as a coordinator for the SWAP equivalent program in Germany. Through direct contact with students from Canada and the United States, she says it usually takes about two weeks to settle and find a job.

"Since you are restricted to a period of three months of work in Germany, you would apply for any kind of student job," she suggested. "Experience has shown that sometimes it goes faster if you already have specific wishes where you would like to work."

Whether English-speaking or not, the different countries offer various challenges in terms of adapting to a different society. While the standard of living in London is more expensive than most other SWAP destinations, there are always loopholes.

"In Berlin, prices of food and accommodation are not high, which makes it an interesting city especially for students," said Mahlke.

"Cities which I would not recommend are real student cities, like Heidelberg or Freiburg. It might be more difficult to find a job there because the German students will also be looking for jobs."

Those who do not want to miss the panache of larger cities often hook up with temping agencies that look for workers on a short-term basis. Whichever SWAP destination one chooses, it is important to show initiative and be flexible.

Four of SWAP's 10 partner countries are non-English-speaking. Students should feel comfortable enough in the foreign language to go through an interview and work. Applicants interested in SWAP Germany have to face a basic language evaluation.

"I believe that the language barrier is the biggest problem," said Mahlke. "It is important that you can speak some German, as it is up to you to find a job and accommodation."

SWAP is currently working on adding more partner countries to their list of destinations, including Ghana and Mexico. However, the possibilities are limited.

"SWAP is dependent on the governmental policies of other countries," said Spensley. "Often, governments fear that working opportunities such as the one offered by SWAP decrease the chances of their own citizens, in particular when they face economic difficulties."

Asked whether September 11 influenced exchange opportunities to the United States, the coordinator is optimistic: "This year we had more people applying for SWAP U.S.A. than ever before. At this level, young people are smarter and get beyond political differences."

"The situation forces you to learn new things," said Johnstone. "I learned a lot about myself and what is important to me besides the career."

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Appetite for the world

The Secret History of Modernism
C. K. Stead
Harvill Press, 2002

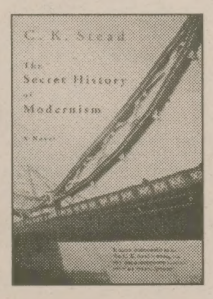
by Katrina Sark

The Secret History of Modernism begins with an accidental meeting that triggers memories in the mind of the narrator, Laszlo Winter.

Laszlo's memories take us back to 1950s London, where three students – Laszlo, Sammy and Rajiv – struggle with the creation of academic papers, try to make sense of love and hope to pick up the key to the meaning of life somewhere along the way.

As we follow them through the streets of the capital, into the reading rooms of the British Museum Library, onto a park bench along the Thames, or into the privacy of their own rooms, we find a part of ourselves in them.

Friendship suddenly makes sense. It's about the comfort of relying on somebody who you only know well enough to know that you are on the same path through life. The closeness of people who have been thrown together from different corners of the world to find that they are not as different from each other as society would like them to think.



It's about wanting to learn more, experience life in all its colours, and plunge into the whirlpool, no matter how high the stakes or how vague the outcome. The overwhelming feeling of being alive with every sense, conscious of every step, aware of every word, and open to every new day, as though it were the first, the last and the only.

The *Secret History of Modernism* is an overview of the 20th century from the perspective of a romantic, poetry-loving student novelist from New Zealand. The book is rich in allusions and references to the works of great poets and it leaves you with the sense of a well-lived century. Stead's philosophical observations about life, love, loyalty and longing create a web of themes, spun throughout the pages.

"Self-absorption is slow death by interior corrosion," writes Stead, "and what protects us against it is curiosity, an appetite for the world in all its forms.

"If you enjoy the world enough to look hard at it, it will save you - but only from yourself, not from disease, war, man-eating tigers or other people, all of which are part of what you must love (or at least love to look out at) in order to live well."

Fighting chance

When Do We start Fighting
Seafood
Nettwerk Records, 2002

by Stewart M. Wood

Fighting . . . could have been so much. It could have been the breakthrough album for UK band Seafood. It's got all the magic ingredients; energy, verve, catchy hooks, that elusive rockingness, an edgy New York production that's both clean and thrashy. But the party, while it may not be over for Seafood, is in serious need of more beer.

Ooh. Manic pop thrill!

Fighting . . . is a high-energy bash that's both raw and nervy. It shows in the tracks: "Splinter" opens up with an ambient hum, quickly erupting into a twin-guitar rockout that would make Judas Priest (c. *British Steel*) trade their guitars for camel-hair underpants and join a Tibetan monastery. Seafood bring the, uh, noise.

"What May Be The Oldest" is the *poo juste*. Bang-bang-bang, shoutey chorus yells from drummer Caroline. Hooray for Seafood.

Fighting . . . might start out as a heads-down-no-nonsense kind of boogie, but the later tracks reveal a degree of introspection that sets them apart from the latest wannabes from the UK. It's interesting to hear the comparisons drawn by mi amigos when I was playing this (over and over and over): names like Dinosaur Jr., Sonic Youth, The Velvet Underground.

Whatever; you just can't beat the old two-guitar attack. . . . But, like the party-poopers that they are, Seafood have gone wrecked it for everyone. The silly-billy guitar player just quit. His exit might have lacked the extremis of Cobain, but it's a pisser nonetheless.

"Time alone will tell if they'll hold it together."

Oh well. Blink and you miss it.

*Woody Rating: **** 1/2 out of 5.*

Exploring the science of Crystal Pite

by Karen Murphy

These aquatic visions tantalized my eyes, yet my mind was thinking that a Kinesiologist would love to study these movements.

I'm just a lowly science student, but Crystal Pite's performance at the sixth annual Romp! Independent Dance Festival at the Belfry Theatre has inspired me to write.

The first piece, "Decembering," opened with a masked Pite standing on a dimly-lit stage, Owen Belton's eerie music adding to the wintery mood. As the lights became brighter, Pite used fluid arm movements, swimming through the music as though it were water.

At one point Pite picked up a stick from a pile of brush and used it as a extension of her arm with obtuse-to-acute triangular movements. She raked another stick with similar geometric movements, then took off her mask and utilized her arms to wind herself up in a circular motion. How I wish that we could have studied her powerful motions in my physics lab.

Later in the show, Pite twitched her body to the music, causing a blurring effect. She built up momentum, then fell to the floor twitching, turning her body as though she had no control, as though the movements had become her master.

There seemed to be two personalities in this piece – the masked one with its slow angular motion and the unmasked one whose blurring movements hypnotized the eyes.

Pite not only executed the movements beautifully, but took on her two characters with all her heart, the athleticism of all her movements working with and against gravity.

Pite began her second piece, "Fiction," with her head in a hangman's noose, holding up a sign that read, "This is one of many possible endings." Another dancer, Cori Caulfield, took the sign as Pite twitched in the entrapment of the noose. Pite's body moved rapidly, running and tapping as if made of rubber, building up momentum as she fought the noose. The movements grew slower as she fought the cord.

The noose won, and Pite was left dangling from the cord, her arms draped – a dead body, swaying in the wind.

Caulfield entered and stood with her arms parallel to the floor. Pite crouched low and brought her arms around Caulfield's waist. They leaned together in a triangular shape, Pite manipulating Caulfield's movements, pulling towards and away from her. Caulfield floated across the stage, her curving arms parallel to the floor and her bustle skirt trailing behind.

The show ended with Pite standing next to a white tree, releasing snow-like material from her hand, as Caulfield leaned back so far that her back rested on her bustle skirt, then rose up and leaned forward again. (Another mind-boggling movement that a kinesiologist should study.)

The results of my analysis? Pite and Caulfield melded artistry with pure athleticism. Any scientists planning to attend a Pite performance should check the right side of their brain at the door and treat their left side to a gravity-defying show.

Waking and meandering towards reality

Waking Life
VHS/DVD, 2002

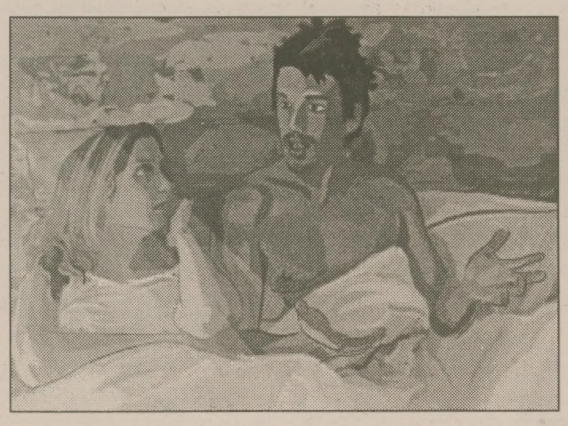
Overall rating: ***1/2
Pretension scale: ***

by Al Newton

I had reservations about reviewing *Waking Life*, a film whose cult following regularly comes out to worship at Cinecenta. However, after viewing Richard Linklater's visionary animated feature, I have begun to understand its divine status.

From the first frame *Waking Life* is a breath of fresh air. The animation is luminous, the characters' features dance and sway like Salvador Dali in the final throws of an absinthe binge, and Glover Gill's vaudeville score bounces along in sync with the action.

Waking Life has no discernable plot – at least not in the Hollywood sense. Its lead character meanders through a vivid world, encountering socially maladjusted teenagers, introspective professors and prophetic street people.



The characters engage in esoteric conversations, each offering a unique take on the essence of reality and the origin of the mind. In one scene two lovers discuss Timothy Leary, reincarnation and dream states in an attempt to define the nature of reality.

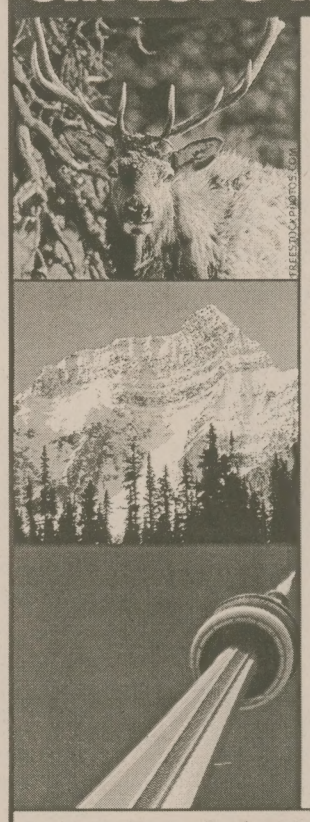
Waking Life walks the line between insightful think piece and self-indulgent, derivative mush. Thankfully, the former wins out. In its attempt to offer up as many questions and answers as possible within the confines of a 90-minute movie, *Waking Life* is brave and cerebral – qualities not normally associated with animated cinema.

Linklater uses the animation not only as a visual companion to the characters' various stories, but also as a stimulating counterpoint to the film's more stagnant moments.

Waking Life plays like a class project by Douglas Coupland and Andy Warhol. It is original, relevant and, most of all, thought-provoking. The audience must constantly re-evaluate the meaning behind the images they are greeted with.

Waking Life is for anyone who enjoys long existential coffee shop conversation with friends, or the human experience in general.

explore north america



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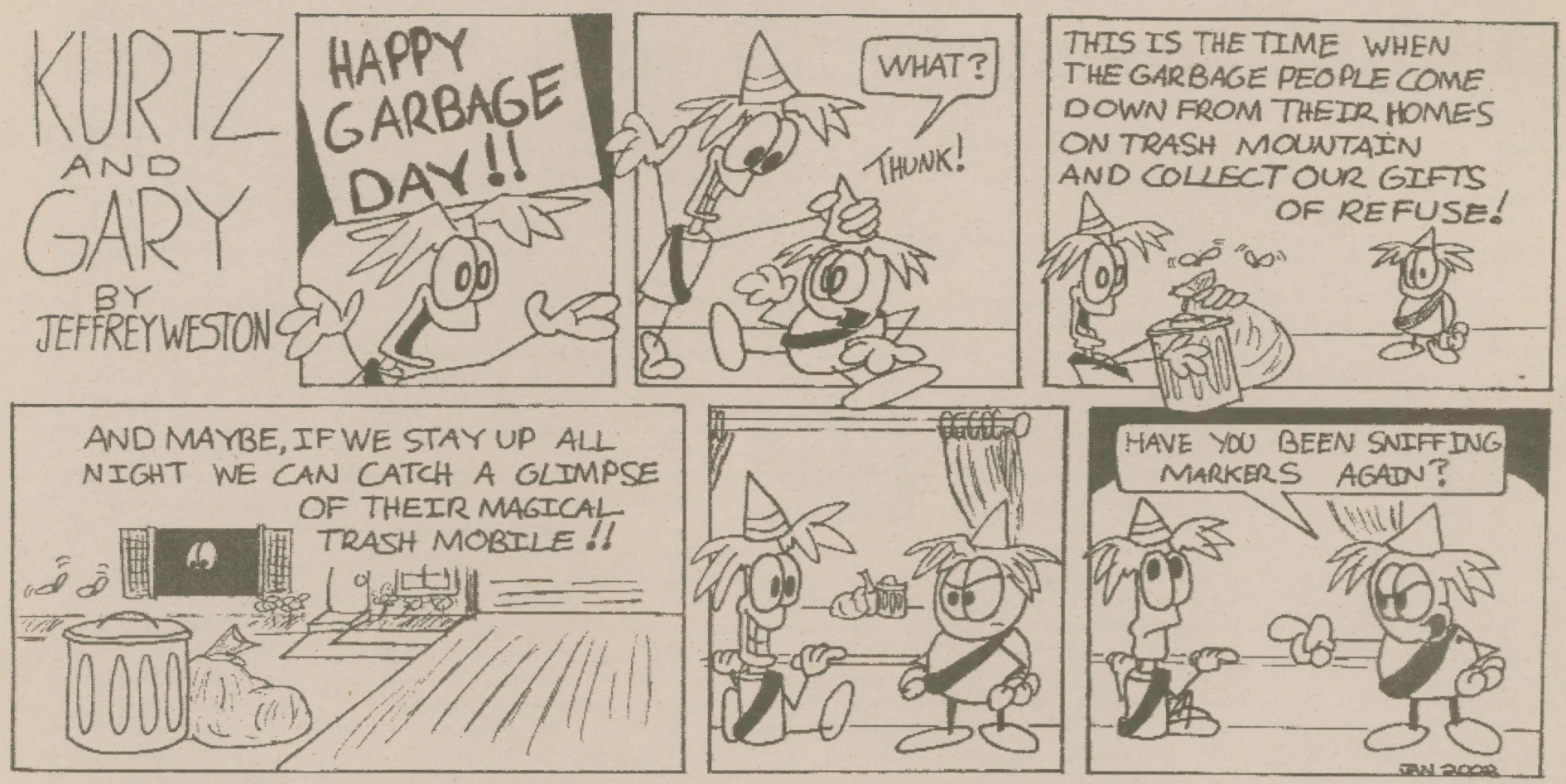
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BY JEFFREY WESTON
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WHAT?
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THIS IS THE TIME WHEN THE GARBAGE PEOPLE COME DOWN FROM THEIR HOMES ON TRASH MOUNTAIN AND COLLECT OUR GIFTS OF REFUSE!
AND MAYBE, IF WE STAY UP ALL NIGHT WE CAN CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THEIR MAGICAL TRASH MOBILE!!
HAVE YOU BEEN SNIFFING MARKERS AGAIN?
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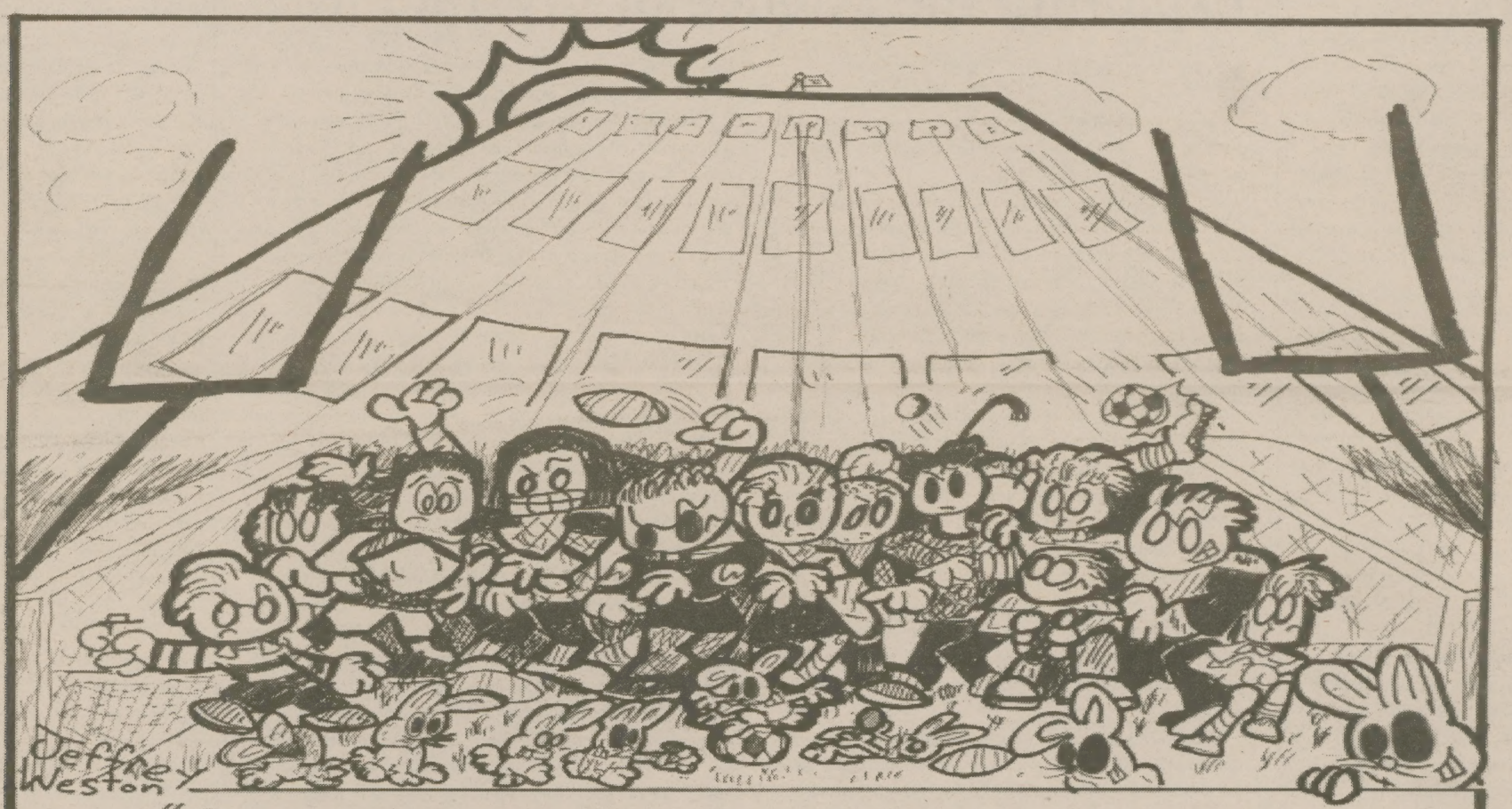

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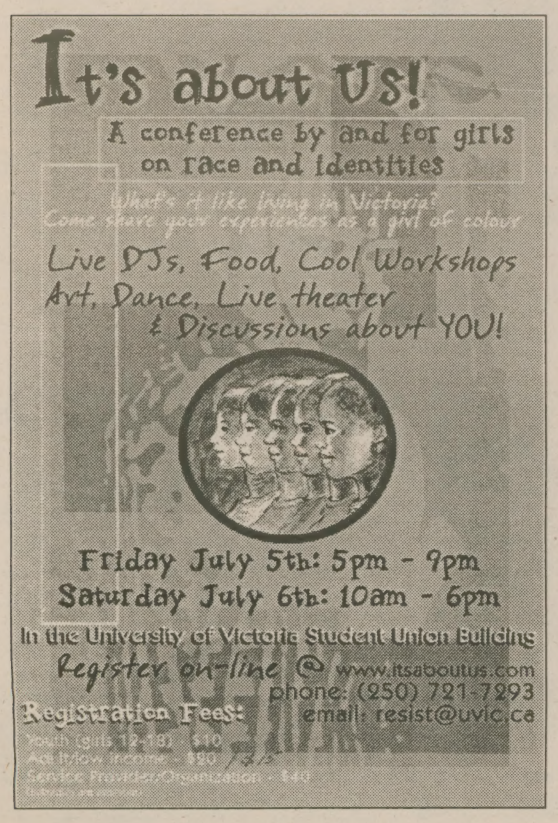
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hey you!

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I like coffee in the morning, but tea is just as good too. Maybe a muffin, or a bagel. Good start to my day.

Is there anyone that couldn't love you? You are the most wonderful person – flowers grow where your feet tread. Too beautiful.

Look, you know you want me. Nate.

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